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up by death or divorce; some fathers were in disrepute, having conducted an unsuccessful war expedition. An old man of a boy's lodge, one who had belonged to many societies, learning in the village that there was talk of buying the youngest society, would encourage his grandson to join and would help him accumulate the goods used for the purchase.

Joining an age-grade society for the first time as a boy, he encountered a "father-son" relationship which had heretofore applied only to his own household. He was selected by a member who was of his father's clan, and the initiate addressed him as "father" during all the proceedings preliminary to the formal purchase; he learned that the other two or three boys his ceremonial "father" had selected were likewise based on a "father-son" relationship. This "father-son" relationship, extending outside his own household, formally instituted when making his first purchase into a society, became the basis of his behavior in buying and selling societies and ceremonies for the rest of his life.

FASTING AND FIRST WAR EXPEDITIONS

Fasting during the Okipa ceremony marked the introduction of the boy to status in the tribe as a whole and was first instituted at the age of eight or nine, when the people of all the villages were assembled for this annual event. The first fasting was of short duration. The fasting periods increased until a boy reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, when he was expected to fast for the entire duration of the Okipa ceremony and to drag buffalo skulls or be suspended by means of thongs inserted under the skin. Visions were not induced each time one fasted; neither were they expected.

It was believed that one's social personality was determined by sacred beings before the birth of the individual and that fasting was a means of renewing these former instructions that were temporarily forgotten while being born and cared for in the village. It was also believed that in the universe there were many sacred people who would adopt as a "son" those who fasted frequently and made offerings to them or who gave feasts to the sacred bundles of the village. A young man was taught to consult not only his own father but all men of his father's clan on matters of a sacred character. If one's sister's son seemed neg-

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lectful and took little interest in securing a "guardian spirit," the mother's brother would tease him and tell him he was bringing dishonor to his clan and suggest that, to be rich and honored, he must begin fasting. He would collect goods for his sister's son and instruct him that he should go out on the hills and fast, using the goods on his return to pay his "clan father" for interpreting the dream. The mother's brother also supervised the fasting of the young boys of ten to fourteen years of age, selecting an isolated place at a short distance from the village where the boys were sheltered in a temporary brush lodge and instructed in the proper procedures for inducing visions.

Children acquired an attitude of respect for the sacred objects of the lodge while young, first by being scolded for playing near the platform on which the bundles were kept, and later by observation of a fixed ritualistic behavior by the parents when the bundles were opened. They were taught that the bundles "protected" them until they were old enough to own "gods" of their own and were informed that their success was in direct proportion to the number and potency of "gods" owned. Children who would inherit or assist in the performance of certain tribal bundle rites received special training beginning when they were ten or twelve years of age. They were also expected to fast often and establish personal bundles based on heir supernatural experiences.

Fasting was a prerequisite to participation in the organized war expeditions. One would conclude from an examination of the mythology that a young man, after his first experience with the supernatural, organized a war expedition immediately and served as leader. In examining the war records of a number of Mandan, it was found that none would have followed a young man receiving his first vision experience and that, even as a member of a recognized war leader's party, he would be "camp tender," bringing wood and water to the camp, preparing the food, and waiting on the leader during the performance of the rites appertaining to warfare. When he was alert and anticipated the needs of the leader and was not lazy, he was promoted to scout and in company with others of that rank was sent out ahead of the main party each morning to look for the enemy or horses. It was while serving as scout that a young man received

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These people living in a climate where they suffer from cold in the severity of their winters, have very naturally reversed our ideas of Heaven and Hell. The latter they describe to be a country very far to the north, of barren and hideous aspect, and covered with eternal snows and ice. The torments of this freezing place they describe as most excruciating; whilst Heaven they suppose to be in a warmer and delightful latitude, where nothing is felt but the keenest enjoyment, and where the country abounds in buffaloes and other luxuries of life. The Great or Good Spirit they believe dwells in the former place for the purpose of there meeting those who have offended him; increasing the agony of their sufferings, by being himself present, administering the penalties. The Bad or Evil Spirit they at the same time suppose to reside in Paradise, still tempting the happy; and those who have gone to the regions of punishment they believe to be tortured for a time proportioned to the amount of their transgressions, and that they are then to be transferred to the land of the happy, where they are again liable to the temptations of the Evil Spirit, and answerable again at a future period for their new offences.

Such is the religious creed of the Mandans, and for the purpose of appeasing the Good and Evil Spirits, and to secure their entrance into those "fields Elysian," or beautiful hunting grounds, do the young men subject themselves to the horrid and sickening cruelties to be described in the following pages.

There are other three distinct objects (yet to be named) for which these religious ceremonies are held, which are as follow:—

First, they are held annually as a celebration of the event of the subsiding of the Flood, which they call *Mee-nee-ro-ka-ha-sha*, (sinking down or settling of the waters.)

Secondly, for the purpose of dancing what they call, *Bel-lohck-na-pic* (the bull-dance); to the strict observance of which they attribute the coming of buffaloes to supply them with food during the season; and

Thirdly and lastly, for the purpose of conducting all the young men of the tribe, as they annually arrive to the age of manhood, through an ordeal of privation and torture, which, while it is supposed to harden their muscles and prepare them for extreme endurance, enables the chiefs who are spectators to the scene, to decide upon their comparative bodily strength and ability to endure the extreme privations and sufferings that often fall to the lots of Indian warriors; and that they may decide who is the most hardy and best able to lead a war-party in case of extreme exigency.

This part of the ceremony, as I have just witnessed it, is truly shocking to behold, and will almost stagger the belief of the world when they read o it. The scene is too terrible and too revolting to be seen or to be told, were it not an essential part of a whole, which will be new to the civilized world, and therefore worth their knowing.

The bull-dance, and many other parts of these ceremonies are exceed-

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796 it may be sacrificed to the water; for he says, "if this is not done, there will be another flood, and no one will be saved, as it was with such tools that the big canoe was made."

Having visited every lodge or wigwam in the village, during the day, and having received such a present at each, as a hatchet, a knife, &c. (which is undoubtedly always prepared and ready for the occasion), he returned at evening and deposited them in the *medicine-lodge*, where they remained until the afternoon of the last day of the ceremony, when, as the final or closing scene, they were thrown into the river in a deep place, from a bank thirty feet high, and in presence of the whole village; from whence they can never be recovered, and where they were, undoubtedly, *sacrificed* to the Spirit of the Water.

796 During the first night of this strange character in the village, no one
● 881 could tell where he slept; and every person, both old and young, and dogs, and all living things were kept within doors, and dead silence reigned every where. On the next morning at sunrise, however, he made his appearance again, and entered the *medicine-lodge;* and at his heels (in "*Indian file,*" *i. e.* single file, one following in another's tracks) all the young men who were candidates for the self-tortures which were to be inflicted, and for the honours that were to be bestowed by the chiefs on those who could most manfully endure them. There were on this occasion about fifty young men who entered the lists, and as they went into the sacred lodge, each one's body was chiefly naked, and covered with clay of different colours; some were red, others were yellow, and some were covered with white clay, giving them the appearance of white men. Each one of them carried in his right hand his *medicine-bag*—on his left arm, his shield of the bull's hide—in his left hand, his bow and arrows, with his quiver slung on his back.

When all had entered the lodge, they placed themselves in reclining postures around its sides, and each one had suspended over his head his respective weapons and *medicine*, presenting altogether, one of the most wild and picturesque scenes imaginable.

Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah (the first or only man) was in the midst of them, and having lit and smoked his medicine-pipe for their success; and having addressed them in a short speech, stimulating and encouraging them to trust to the Great Spirit for His protection during the severe ordeal they were about to pass through; he called into the lodge an old medicine or mystery-man, whose body was painted yellow, and whom he appointed master of ceremonies during this occasion, whom they denominated in their language *O-kee-pah Ka-se-kah* (keeper or conductor of the ceremonies). He was appointed, and the authority passed by the presentation of the medicine-pipe, on which they consider hangs all the power of holding and conducting all these rites.

After this delegated authority had thus passed over to the medicine-man; Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah shook hands with him, and bade him good

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bye, saying "that he was going back to the mountains in the west, from whence he should assuredly return in just a year from that time, to open the lodge again." He then went out of the lodge, and passing through the village, took formal leave of the chiefs in the same manner, and soon disappeared over the bluffs from whence he came. No more was seen of this surprising character during the occasion; but I shall have something yet to say of him and his strange office before I get through the Letter.

To return to the lodge,—the medicine or mystery-man just appointed, and who had received his injunctions from Nu-mohk-muck-a-nah, was left sole conductor and keeper; and according to those injunctions, it was his duty to lie by a small fire in the centre of the lodge, with his medicine-pipe in his hand, crying to the Great Spirit incessantly, watching the young men, and preventing entirely their escape from the lodge, and all communication whatever with people outside, for the space of four days and nights, during which time they were not allowed to *eat*, to *drink*, or to *sleep*, preparatory to the excruciating self-tortures which they were to endure on the fourth day.

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I mentioned that I had made four paintings of these strange scenes, and the first one exhibits the interior of the medicine-lodge at this moment; with the young men all reclining around its sides, and the conductor or mystery-man lying by the fire, crying to the Great Spirit (PLATE 66). It was just at this juncture that I was ushered into this sacred temple of their worship, with my companions, which was, undoubtedly, the first time that their devotions had ever been trespassed upon by the presence of pale faces; and in this instance had been brought about in the following strange and unexpected manner.

I had most luckily for myself, painted a full-length portrait of this great magician or high-priest, but a day previous to the commencement of the ceremonies (in which I had represented him in the performance of some of his mysteries), with which he had been so exceedingly pleased as well as astonished (as "he could see its eyes move"), that I must needs be, in his opinion, deeply skilled in magic and mysteries, and well-entitled to a respectable rank in the craft, to which I had been at once elevated by the unanimous voice of the doctors, and regularly initiated, and styled *Te-ho-pee-nee-wash-ee-waska-pooska*, the *white medicine* (or Spirit) *painter*.

With this very honourable degree which had just been conferred upon me, I was standing in front of the medicine-lodge early in the morning, with my companions by my side, endeavouring to get a peep, if possible, into its sacred interior; when this *master of ceremonies*, guarding and conducting its secrets, as I before described, came out of the door and taking me with a firm *professional* affection by the arm, led me into this *sanctum sanctorum*, which was strictly guarded from, even a peep or a gaze from the vulgar, by a vestibule of eight or ten feet in length, guarded with a double screen or door, and two or three dark and frowning centinels with spears

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796 over him, and his body being covered with grease, took instantly a different hue. He seemed heart-broken at this signal disgrace, and commenced crying most vehemently, when, *a l'instant*, another caught his *wand* from his hand, and broke it across her knee. It was snatched for by others, who broke it still into bits, and then threw them at him. His power was now gone—his bodily strength was exhausted, and he made a bolt for the prairie—he dashed through the crowd, and made his way through the piquets on the back part of the village, where were placed for the purpose, an hundred or more women and girls, who escorted him as he ran on the prairie for half a mile or more, beating him with sticks, and stones, and dirt, and kicks, and cuffs, until he was at length seen escaping from their clutches, and making the best of his retreat over the prairie bluffs, from whence he first appeared.

At the moment of this signal victory, and when all eyes lost sight of him as he disappeared over the bluffs, the whole village united their voices in shouts of satisfaction. The bull-dance then stopped, and preparations were instantly made for the commencement of the cruelties which were to take place within the lodge, leaving us to draw, from what had just transpired, the following beautiful moral :—

That in the midst of their religious ceremonies, the Evil Spirit (O-kee-hee-de) made his entrée for the purpose of doing mischief, and of disturbing their worship—that he was held in check, and defeated by the superior influence and virtue of the *medicine-pipe*, and at last, driven in disgrace out of the village, by the very part of the community whom he came to abuse.

796 ● 881 At the close of this exciting scene, preparations were made, as above stated, by the return of the master of ceremonies and musicians to the medicine-lodge, where also were admitted at the same time a number of men, who were to be instruments of the cruelties to be inflicted; and also the chief and doctors of the tribe, who were to look on, and bear witness to, and decide upon, the comparative degree of fortitude, with which the young men sustain themselves in this most extreme and excruciating ordeal. The chiefs having seated themselves on one side of the lodge, dressed out in their robes and splendid head-dresses—the band of music seated and arranged themselves in another part; and the old master of ceremonies having placed himself in front of a small fire in the centre of the lodge, with his "big pipe" in his hands, and having commenced smoking to the Great Spirit, with all possible vehemence for the success of these aspirants, presented the subject for the third picture, which they call "*pohk-hong*," the cutting scene (PLATE 68). Around the sides of the lodge are seen, still reclining, as I have before mentioned, a part of the group, whilst others of them have passed the ordeal of self-tortures, and have been removed out of the lodge; and others still are seen in the very act of submitting to them, which were inflicted in the following manner:—After having removed the *sanctissimus sanctorum*, or little scaffold, of which I before spoke, and having

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removed also the buffalo and human skulls from the floor, and attached them to the posts of the lodge; and two men having taken their positions near the middle of the lodge, for the purpose of inflicting the tortures—the one with the scalping-knife, and the other with the bunch of splints (which I have before mentioned) in his hand; one at a time of the young fellows, already emaciated with fasting, and thirsting, and waking, for nearly four days and nights, advanced from the side of the lodge, and placed himself on his hands and feet, or otherwise, as best suited for the performance of the operation, where he submitted to the cruelties in the following manner:—An inch or more of the flesh on each shoulder, or each breast was taken up between the thumb and finger by the man who held the knife in his right hand; and the knife, which had been ground sharp on both edges, and then hacked and notched with the blade of another, to make it produce as much pain as possible, was forced through the flesh below the fingers, and being withdrawn, was followed with a splint or skewer, from the other, who held a bunch of such in his left hand, and was ready to force them through the wound. There were then two cords lowered down from the top of the lodge (by men who were placed on the lodge outside, for the purpose), which were fastened to these splints or skewers, and they instantly began to haul him up; he was thus raised until his body was suspended from the ground where he rested, until the knife and a splint were passed through the flesh or integuments in a similar manner on each arm below the shoulder (over the *brachialis externus*), below the elbow (over the *extensor carpi radialis*), on the thighs (over the *vastus externus*), and below the knees (over the *peroneus*).

In some instances they remained in a reclining position on the ground until this painful operation was finished, which was performed, in all instances, exactly on the same parts of the body and limbs; and which, in its progress, occupied some five or six minutes.

Each one was then instantly raised with the cords, until the weight of his body was suspended by them, and then, while the blood was streaming down their limbs, the bystanders hung upon the splints each man's appropriate shield, bow and quiver, &c.; and in many instances, the skull of a buffalo with the horns on it, was attached to each lower arm and each lower leg, for the purpose, probably, of preventing by their great weight, the struggling, which might otherwise have taken place to their disadvantage whilst they were hung up.

When these things were all adjusted, each one was raised higher by the cords, until these weights all swung clear from the ground, leaving his feet, in most cases, some six or eight feet above the ground. In this plight they at once became appalling and frightful to look at—the flesh, to support the weight of their bodies, with the additional weights which were attached to them, was raised six or eight inches by the skewers; and their heads sunk forward on the breasts, or thrown backwards, in a much more frightful condition, according to the way in which they were hung up.

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The unflinching fortitude, with which every one of them bore this part of the torture surpassed credulity; each one as the knife was passed through his flesh sustained an unchangeable countenance; and several of them, seeing me making sketches, beckoned me to look at their faces, which I watched through all this horrid operation, without being able to detect anything but the pleasantest smiles as they looked me in the eye, while I could hear the knife rip through the flesh, and feel enough of it myself, to start involuntary and uncontroullable tears over my cheeks.

When raised to the condition above described, and completely suspended by the cords, the sanguinary hands, through which he had just passed, turned back to perform a similar operation on another who was ready, and each one in his turn passed into the charge of others, who instantly introduced him to a new and improved stage of their refinements in cruelty.

Surrounded by imps and demons as they appear, a dozen or more, who seem to be concerting and devising means for his exquisite agony, gather around him, when one of the number advances towards him in a sneering manner, and commences turning him around with a pole which he brings in his hand for the purpose. This is done in a gentle manner at first; but gradually increased, when the brave fellow, whose proud spirit can controul its agony no longer, burst out in the most lamentable and heart-rending cries that the human voice is capable of producing, crying forth a prayer to the Great Spirit to support and protect him in this dreadful trial; and continually repeating his confidence in his protection. In this condition he is continued to be turned, faster and faster—and there is no hope of escape from it, nor chance for the slightest relief, until by fainting, his voice falters, and his struggling ceases, and he hangs, apparently, a still and lifeless corpse! When he is, by turning, gradually brought to this condition, which is generally done within ten or fifteen minutes, there is a close scrutiny passed upon him among his tormentors, who are checking and holding each other back as long as the least struggling or tremour can be discovered, lest he should be removed before he is (as they term it) "entirely dead."

When brought to this alarming and most frightful condition, and the turning has gradually ceased, as his voice and his strength have given out, leaving him to hang entirely still, and apparently lifeless; when his tongue is distended from his mouth, and his *medicine-bag*, which he has affectionately and superstitiously clung to with his left hand, has dropped to the ground; the signal is given to the men on top of the lodge, by gently striking the cord with the pole below, when they very gradually and carefully lower him to the ground.

In this helpless condition he lies, like a loathsome corpse to look at, though in the keeping (as they call it) of the Great Spirit, whom he trusts will protect him, and enable him to get up and walk away. As soon as he is lowered to the ground thus, one of the bystanders advances, and pulls out the two splints or pins from the breasts and shoulders, thereby disengaging

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him from the cords by which he has been hung up; but leaving all the others with their weights, &c. hanging to his flesh.

In this condition he lies for six or eight minutes, until he gets strength to rise and move himself, for no one is allowed to assist or offer him aid, as he is here enjoying the most valued privilege which a Mandan can boast of, that of "trusting his life to the keeping of the Great Spirit," in this time of extreme peril.

As soon as he is seen to get strength enough to rise on his hands and feet, and drag his body around the lodge, he crawls with the weights still hanging to his body, to another part of the lodge, where there is another Indian sitting with a hatchet in his hand, and a dried buffalo skull before him; and here, in the most earnest and humble manner, by holding up the little finger of his left hand to the Great Spirit, he expresses to Him, in a speech of a few words, his willingness to give it as a sacrifice; when he lays it on the dried buffalo skull, where the other chops it off near the hand, with a blow of the hatchet!

Nearly all of the young men whom I saw passing this horrid ordeal, gave in the above manner, the little finger of the left hand; and I saw also several, who immediately afterwards (and apparently with very little concern or emotion), with a similar speech, extended in the same way, the *fore*-finger of the same hand, and that too was struck off; leaving on the left hand only the two middle fingers and the thumb; all which they deem absolutely essential for holding the bow, the only weapon for the left hand.

One would think that this mutilation had thus been carried quite far enough; but I have since examined several of the head chiefs and dignitaries of the tribe, who have also given, in this manner, the little finger of the right hand, which is considered by them to be a much greater sacrifice than both of the others; and I have found also a number of their most famous men, who furnish me incontestible proof, by five or six corresponding scars on each arm, and each breast, and each leg, that they had so many times in their lives submitted to this almost incredible operation, which seems to be optional with them; and the oftener they volunteer to go through it, the more famous they become in the estimation of their tribe.

No bandages are applied to the fingers which have been amputated, nor any arteries taken up; nor is any attention whatever, paid to them or the other wounds; but they are left (as they say) "for the Great Spirit to cure, who will surely take good care of them." It is a remarkable fact (which I learned from a close inspection of their wounds from day to day) that the bleeding is but very slight and soon ceases, probably from the fact of their extreme exhaustion and debility, caused by want of sustenance and sleep, which checks the natural circulation, and admirably at the same time prepares them to meet the severity of these tortures without the same degree of sensibility and pain, which, under other circumstances, might result in inflammation and death.

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During the whole of the time of this cruel part of these most extraordinary inflictions, the chiefs and dignitaries of the tribe are looking on, to decide who are the hardiest and "stoutest hearted"—who can hang the longest by his flesh before he faints, and who will be soonest up, after he has been down; that they may know whom to appoint to lead a war-party, or place at the most honourable and desperate post. The four old men are incessantly beating upon the sacks of water and singing the whole time, with their voices strained to the highest key, vaunting forth, for the encouragement of the young men, the power and efficacy of the *medicine-pipe*, which has disarmed the monster O-kee-hee-de (or Evil Spirit), and driven him from the village, and will be sure to protect them and watch over them through their present severe trial.

As soon as six or eight had passed the ordeal as above described, they were led out of the lodge, with their weights hanging to their flesh, and dragging on the ground, to undergo another, and a still more appalling mode of suffering in the centre of the village, and in presence of the whole nation, in the manner as follows:—

The signal for the commencement of this part of the cruelties was given by the old master of ceremonies, who again ran out as in the buffalo-dance, and leaning against the big canoe, with his *medicine-pipe* in his hand, began to cry. This was done several times in the afternoon, as often as there were six or eight who had passed the ordeal just described within the lodge, who were then taken out in the open area, in the presence of the whole village, with the buffalo skulls and other weights attached to their flesh, and dragging on the ground! There were then in readiness, and prepared for the purpose, about twenty young men, selected of equal height and equal age; with their bodies chiefly naked, with beautiful (and similar) head-dresses of war-eagles' quills, on their heads, and a wreath made of willow boughs held in the hands between them, connecting them in a chain or circle in which they ran around the *big canoe*, with all possible speed, raising their voices in screams and yelps to the highest pitch that was possible, and keeping the curb or big canoe in the centre, as their nucleus.

Then were led forward the young men who were further to suffer, and being placed at equal distances apart, and outside of the ring just described, each one was taken in charge of two athletic young men, fresh and strong, who stepped up to him, one on each side, and by wrapping a broad leather strap around his wrists, without tying it, grasped it firm underneath the hand, and stood prepared for what they call *Eh-ke-nah-ka-nah-pick* (the last race, PLATE 69). This, the spectator looking on would suppose was most correctly named, for he would think it was the last race they could possibly run in this world.

In this condition they stand, pale and ghastly, from abstinence and loss of blood, until all are prepared, and the word is given, when all start and run around, outside of the other ring; and each poor fellow, with his weights

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dragging on the ground, and his furious conductors by his side, who hurry him forward by the wrists, struggles in the desperate emulation to run longer without "dying" (as they call it) than his comrades, who are fainting around him and sinking down, like himself, where their bodies are dragged with all possible speed, and often with their faces in the dirt. In the commencement of this dance or race they all start at a moderate pace, and their speed being gradually increased, the pain becomes so excruciating that their languid and exhausted frames give out, and they are dragged by their wrists until they are disengaged from the weights that were attached to their flesh, and this must be done by such violent force as to tear the flesh out with the splint, which (as they say) can never be pulled out endwise, without greatly offending the Great Spirit and defeating the object for which they have thus far suffered. The splints or skewers which are put through the breast and the shoulders, take up a part of the pectoral or trapezius muscle, which is necessary for the support of the great weight of their bodies, and which, as I have before mentioned, are withdrawn as soon as he is lowered down—but all the others, on the legs and arms, seem to be very ingeniously passed through the flesh and integuments without taking up the muscle, and even these, to be broken out, require so strong and so violent a force that most of the poor fellows fainted under the operation, and when they were freed from the last of the buffalo skulls and other weights, (which was often done by some of the bystanders throwing the weight of their bodies on to them as they were dragging on the ground) they were in every instance dropped by the persons who dragged them, and their bodies were left, appearing like nothing but a mangled and a loathsome corpse! At this strange and frightful juncture, the two men who had dragged them, fled through the crowd and away upon the prairie, as if they were guilty of some enormous crime, and were fleeing from summary vengeance.

Each poor fellow, having thus patiently and manfully endured the privations and tortures devised for him, and (in this last struggle with the most appalling effort) torn himself loose from them and his tormentors, he lies the second time, in the "keeping (as he terms it) of the Great Spirit," to whom he issues his repeated prayers, and entrusts his life: and in whom he reposes the most implicit confidence for his preservation and recovery. As an evidence of this, and of the high value which these youths set upon this privilege, there is no person, not a relation or a chief of the tribe, who is allowed, or who would dare, to step forward to offer an aiding hand, even to save his life; for not only the rigid customs of the nation, and the pride of the individual who has entrusted his life to the keeping of the Great Spirit, would sternly reject such a tender; but their superstition, which is the strongest of all arguments in an Indian community, would alone, hold all the tribe in fear and dread of interfering, when they consider they have so good a reason to believe that the Great Spirit has undertaken the special care and protection of his devoted worshippers.

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In this "last race," which was the struggle that finally closed their sufferings, each one was dragged until he fainted, and was thus left, looking more like the dead than the living: and thus each one laid, until, by the aid of the Great Spirit, he was in a few minutes seen gradually rising, and at last reeling and staggering, like a drunken man, through the crowd (which made way for him) to his wigwam, where his friends and relatives stood ready to take him into hand and restore him.

In this frightful scene, as in the buffalo-dance, the whole nation was assembled as spectators, and all raised the most piercing and violent yells and screams they could possibly produce, to drown the cries of the suffering ones, that no heart could even be touched with sympathy for them. I have mentioned before, that six or eight of the young men were brought from the medicine-lodge at a time, and when they were thus passed through this shocking ordeal, the medicine-men and the chiefs returned to the interior, where as many more were soon prepared, and underwent a similar treatment; and after that another batch, and another, and so on, until the whole number, some forty-five or fifty had run in this sickening circle, and, by leaving their weights, had opened the flesh for honourable scars. I said *all*, but there was one poor fellow though (and I shudder to tell it), who was dragged around and around the circle, with the skull of an elk hanging to the flesh on one of his legs,—several had jumped upon it, but to no effect, for the splint was under the sinew, which could not be broken. The dragging became every instant more and more furious, and the apprehensions for the poor fellow's life, apparent by the piteous howl which was set up for him by the multitude around; and at last the medicine-man ran, with his medicine-pipe in his hand, and held them in check, when the body was dropped, and left upon the ground, with the skull yet hanging to it. The boy, who was an extremely interesting and fine-looking youth, soon recovered his senses and his strength, looking deliberately at his torn and bleeding limbs; and also with the most pleasant smile of defiance, upon the misfortune which had now fallen to his peculiar lot, crawled through the crowd (instead of walking, which they are never again at liberty to do until the flesh is torn out, and the article left) to the prairie, and over which, for the distance of half a mile, to a sequestered spot, without any attendant, where he laid three days and three nights, yet longer, without food, and praying to the Great Spirit, until suppuration took place in the wound, and by the decaying of the flesh the weight was dropped, and the splint also, which he dare not extricate in another way. At the end of this, he crawled back to the village on his hands and knees, being too much emaciated to walk, and begged for something to eat, which was at once given him, and he was soon restored to health.

These extreme and difficult cases often occur, and I learn that in such instances the youth has it at his option to get rid of the weight that is thus left upon him, in such way as he may choose, and some of those modes are

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far more extraordinary than the one which I have just named. Several of the Traders, who have been for a number of years in the habit of seeing this part of the ceremony, have told me that two years since, when they were looking on, there was one whose flesh on the arms was so strong that the weights could not be left, and he dragged them with his body to the river by the side of the village, where he set a stake fast in the ground on the top of the bank, and fastening cords to it, he let himself half-way down a perpendicular wall of rock, of twenty-five or thirty feet, where the weight of his body was suspended by the two cords attached to the flesh of his arms. In this awful condition he hung for several days, equi-distant from the top of the rock and the deep water below, into which he at last dropped and saved himself by swimming ashore!

I need record no more of these shocking and disgusting instances, of which I have already given enough to convince the world of the correctness of the established fact of the Indian's superior stoicism and power of endurance, although some recent writers have, from motives of envy, from ignorance, or something else, taken great pains to cut the poor Indian short in everything, and in *this*, even as if it were a virtue.

I am ready to accord to them in this particular, the palm; the credit of outdoing anything and everybody, and of enduring more than civilized man ever aspired to or ever thought of. My heart has sickened also with disgust for so abominable and ignorant a custom, and still I stand ready with all my heart, to excuse and forgive them for adhering so strictly to an ancient celebration, founded in superstitions and mysteries, of which they know not the origin, and constituting a material part and feature in the code and forms of their religion.

Reader, I will return with you a moment to the medicine-lodge, which is just to be closed, and then we will indulge in some general reflections upon what has passed, and in what, and for what purposes this strange batch of mysteries has been instituted and perpetuated.

After these young men, who had for the last four days occupied the medicine-lodge, had been operated on, in the manner above described, and taken out of it, the old medicine-man, master of ceremonies, returned, (still crying to the Great Spirit) sole tenant of that sacred place, and brought out the "edged tools," which I before said had been collected at the door of every man's wigwam, to be given as a sacrifice to the water, and leaving the lodge securely fastened, he approached the bank of the river, when all the medicine-men attended him, and all the nation were spectators; and in their presence he threw them from a high bank into very deep water, from which they cannot be recovered, and where they are, correctly speaking, made a sacrifice to the water. This part of the affair took place just exactly at sun-down, and closed the scene, being the end or finale of the *Mandan religious ceremony*.